

On January 11, the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling released its report. I welcome the report of National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling and urge Congress and the President to take action to prevent another spill and restore the Gulf region. While much has happened in the world in the nine months since the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded and sank, little has changed. In fact, tar balls are still washing up along the shores of the Louisiana coast. Time alone will not solve the problem of an unregulated, unsafe industry and a still contaminated Gulf.

In the previous Congress, the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives passed the largest overhaul of the oil industry in decades. All but two Republicans voted against it. That legislation was then held up in the Senate, and we therefore find ourselves exactly where we were before the spill. With much of what was in that bill subsequently recommended in this new report, we should not let this opportunity to advance the drilling industry pass by once again.

Between the pollution resulting from the oil spill and gas prices once again rising, the need for a 21st century energy plan is obvious. Mere energy independence isn't enough. We should heed the spill's warning that our current energy policy leads down a dead-end path. We need to wean ourselves from fossil fuels and develop a comprehensive sustainable energy strategy.

The Commission's report unequivocally declares that the explosion "could have been prevented" and "can be traced to a series of mistakes made by BP, Halliburton, and Transocean that reveal such systematic failures in risk management that they place in doubt the safety culture of the entire industry." Leaving the industry in its current state would be a severe abdication of our responsibilities as members of Congress and as Americans. I urge President Obama to implement the report's recommended executive actions as well as work with Congress to finish the job.